

MASS. TC50.2; H19

HANSCOM FIELD

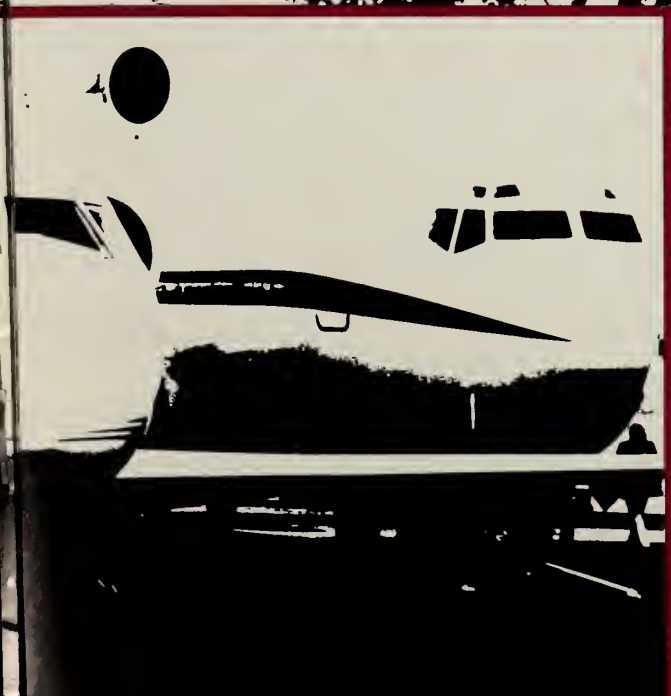


312066 0278 1272 4

A DELICATE BALANCE



GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION
AUG 10 1989
University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

<https://archive.org/details/hanscomfielddeli00mass>

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



L. G. Hanscom Field is New England's busiest general aviation airport. It is geographically bounded by Lexington, Concord, Lincoln, and Bedford—communities known for their colonial history, traditions and for their civic activism. Little wonder then, that all of Hanscom Field's neighbors have always taken great interest in the planning and operation of the airport.

Located about 20 miles northwest of Boston, Hanscom Field is home to almost 500 permanently based aircraft. The airport serves the diverse flying needs of major corporations, research and development firms, and educational institutions. Hanscom Field's major users are a mix of private pilots and flight schools. Other operators include a commuter carrier, some charter, light cargo, and military.

Over the past twenty years, Hanscom Field's flight operations have changed from mainly military to mostly general aviation. The number and types of flights have changed during this period too: in 1970, for example, total operations exceeded 300,000. More recently, the number dropped from almost 250,000 in 1985 to approximately 229,000 in 1988.

Although business jet activity has increased during this period, the change mirrors the recent national trend of fewer single engine aircraft operations at regional airports. The higher proportion of small business jets also reflects the strong surge in the Massachusetts economy and development in nearby areas.

Hanscom Field's popularity derives from its excellent location and facilities. Business users, in particular, cite the Field's location (near route 128 and its many high tech industries) and sophisticated navigational aids as prime reasons for using the airport.

While the airport is seen as a regional economic asset which plays a vital role in the growing Massachusetts economy, Hanscom's residential neighbors raise legitimate concerns about the airfield's future development, about growth in operations, and of course about aircraft noise.

With this brochure we hope to provide a historical background for discussion of current issues at Hanscom. We will also describe Massport's management of the airport and Massport's cooperative and continuing dialogue with Hanscom Field's surrounding communities.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David W. Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David W. Davis
Executive Director

A BIT OF HISTORY

In 1940, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts acquired about 500 acres of land in the towns of Bedford, Concord, and Lincoln. Legislation established the land as a site for permanently based or fixed-base aircraft operators of flight schools. The site also accommodated the aviation needs of the U.S. Army Air Corps. The airport was then known as the Boston-Bedford Airport.

In 1941, the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Administration finished the construction of three runways and turned over the airport to the Army Air Corps. The airfield was renamed the Laurence G. Hanscom Field and was officially dedicated in 1943. The Enabling Act of 1956 created the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) and granted it control of the Commonwealth's land at Hanscom Field; the Air Force continued to lease and operate the airport facilities.

In 1974, Massport assumed control of the operation and maintenance of the Field and its runways, and managed it as a general aviation airport available for private and business use. Massport's management of Hanscom Field has resulted in improvements ranging from the airport's infrastructure to the development of a Master Plan that guides the Authority in shaping the airport's future.





DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS



The Master Plan's policy statements are grounded in a philosophy of careful management. The Plan reflects the diverse interests of Hanscom Field users and neighbors and was prepared by Massport with the help of the Governor's Hanscom Task Force (a group made up of members of the surrounding communities plus airport users, the State Legislature, and other public interest groups). Since 1978, the Plan has been used as the basis for considering all new proposals and projects.

Consistent with the principles of the Master Plan, Massport has also renovated facilities and updated services at Hanscom Field. During the past ten years, Massport has committed more than \$13 million in capital expenditures to include the construction of about 100 hangars, a new taxiway, and resurfacing most runways. Under Massport's

management, the Federal Aviation Administration has constructed instrument landing systems and runway approach lighting systems for two runways.

During 1988, Hanscom's operating revenues totalled \$2.2 million, while operating expenses and capital expenditures reached \$3.4 million. The operating deficit and capital expenditures of \$1.2 million were made up by other Massport revenues.

An administrative and maintenance staff of 15, aided by Massport's centralized aviation and executive personnel, is responsible for daily operations and maintenance at Hanscom. The job includes maintaining more than 100 hangars, up to 20 buildings, and maintaining 1,200 acres of land.

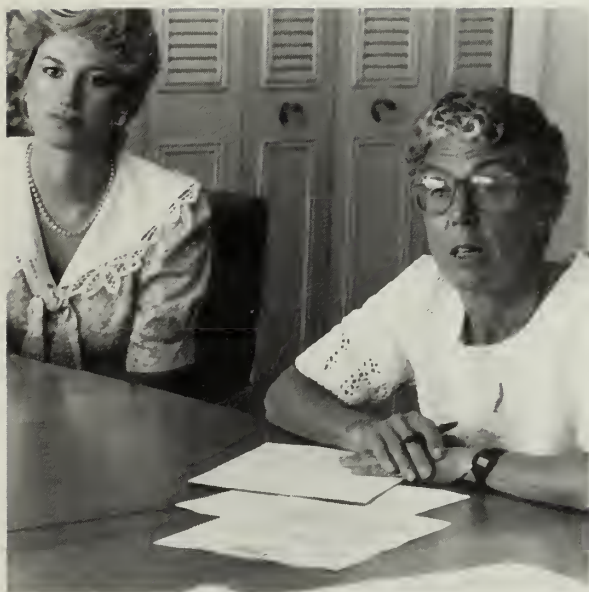
MEETING THE NEEDS OF USERS AND THE COMMUNITY

Good relations with surrounding communities and those who use Hanscom Field form an integral part of the management of Hanscom Field. The environment, growth, noise, traffic, and land use are all salient issues in Massport's continuing dialogue with its neighbors, tenants, and other constituencies.

In 1974, the voice of the surrounding communities was officially added to Massport's decision process when the Hanscom Task Force was established to review the transfer of surplus Air Force properties to Massport. The Task Force worked closely with Massport and provided advice during the development of the Master Plan.

Since 1980, the Task Force's excellent work has been continued by the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission—a group representing neighbors, users, concerned groups, and appropriate public agencies.

Through the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission, Massport regularly seeks community advice and comment on plans and proposals. In its advisory role, the Commission keeps itself informed on such issues as noise abatement, land use and traffic.



CONTROLLING GROWTH

Of great importance to the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission and to the communities, is the rate of growth in operations at Hanscom and the retention of the character of the airport. In 1978, the Master Plan estimated that Hanscom Field would reach its capacity of 320,000 operations by 1980. Since those forecasts were made, activity at Hanscom Field has grown at a rate substantially below the projections. In 1988 for example, there were slightly more than 229,000 operations.

During the past eight years, corporate aviation in New England has not grown as steadily as predicted due to many factors including the national economy and fuel cost. However, the past several years have shown strong increases in the market as the regional economy has strengthened, fuel prices have remained low, and New England's service and high technology industries have begun to commit themselves to corporate aviation.

Flight schools, Hanscom Field's most active users, have had a varied history at Hanscom. In 1970, local flight school operations numbered more than 150,000 in response to the many veterans who took advantage of G.I. Bill subsidies. By 1981, these operations had decreased to just under 80,000. Since then, the pendulum has swung back and forth showing higher and lower levels of activity; in 1986, operations reached approximately 82,000. The revitalization of this segment of general aviation at Hanscom is above the national trend which has been showing an overall decline in flight school activity. The trend is believed to be a direct result of the strong local economy.



Growth in operations from the potential diversion of general aviation—particularly jet traffic from Logan Airport to Hanscom—has not been strong, nor is it likely to become so. Diversion has been limited by several factors. Regional studies show that commuter airlines depend heavily on passengers connecting to other Logan flights and are unlikely to divert if the connection is not offered. Also, Logan's general aviation fees have not, as some argued, led to diversion, since business jets are the least sensitive of general aviation users to increased fees.



Finally, trends show that passengers travelling to various locations prefer to choose from a variety of flights, and Logan Airport provides such choices. Nevertheless, analysts do expect some future "origin and destination commuter operations" or simply, flights back and forth between Hanscom Field and large metropolitan areas such as New York City.



LIMITING NOISE

Massport's objective is to prevent aircraft noise at Hanscom Field from increasing beyond a level agreed to during the development of the Master Plan. To achieve this objective, Massport monitors flight activity, measures and analyzes the noise contribution of the different types of aircraft operating at Hanscom, and publishes an annual report of noise trends. Each new proposed business or service at Hanscom is analyzed for its potential impact on the overall noise level.

Massport's Noise Rules and Regulations published in 1980, prohibit the noisiest general aviation aircraft from operating at Hanscom. The Rules established a nighttime operation surcharge and restricted commercial operations in aircraft with a seating capacity greater than 60 seats. Since the Noise Rules were put in effect, nighttime noise levels have been reduced substantially.

In addition, the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission has also adopted Noise Abatement procedures which are regularly distributed to fixed-based aircraft owners and visiting pilots. Recently, the Hanscom Pilots Association also began distributing its own set of guidelines for operating light, single engine aircraft in the area.

Massport also monitors noise to see whether 24-hour average daily sound levels have changed at Hanscom or if a portion of the total noise exposure has shifted from one community to another.

The natural rate of aircraft replacement also contributes to the decline in noise. Today, aircraft operating at Hanscom are newer, less noisy aircraft, as compared to the aircraft that operated at Hanscom ten years ago. The consulting firm of Harris, Miller, Miller, and Hanson, Inc. supports this fact in a report which indicates a rapid changeover to less noisy aircraft.

Massport's noise complaint phone line (617) 274-6814, allows residents of surrounding communities to report noisy or unusual operations. The reports are reviewed by the Federal Aviation Administration for any violations of operational rules. All complaints are also reviewed monthly with members of the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission. If warranted, residents are invited to visit the airport and meet with key staff members to review airport operations.





TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS

Roadway traffic near Hanscom Field concerns Massport and the surrounding towns. Traffic congestion results when large employers are located near major roads such as Routes 128 and 2A or when there is greater dependence on secondary roads connecting area businesses to these major arteries.

While the general aviation airport is not a major contributor to this congestion, Massport has been a major and consistent contributor to traffic studies that try to identify and provide solutions to traffic problems.

A group that has been helpful to Massport in understanding traffic patterns has been the Hanscom Area Traffic Study Committee, known as HATS. The committee was formed in 1980, meets regularly, and is comprised of official representatives from the four towns, Massport, Minute Man National Historic Park, and the Hanscom Air Force Base. Through the years, the committee has provided Massport and the community with a regional framework to understand traffic flows. HATS has also been a vehicle for towns to review each other's development proposals and what effect these plans might have on traffic. In its planning of Hanscom Field, Massport has adopted HATS' studies which examine projected traffic problems.



PRESERVING THE AIRPORT'S AND THE COMMUNITIES' CHARACTER

Hanscom Field is surrounded by towns of distinct character and distinct concerns. Together, Concord, Bedford, Lincoln, and Lexington include some of the region's most significant historic and open space resources. Just as Massport's development and land use decisions can affect the character of Hanscom's neighbors, land use and planning decisions made by the towns, the business community, the Minute Man National Historic Park, and the Air Force Base can also affect the character of the airport.

A cooperative planning process between Massport, the towns, and other major land owners, particularly the Minute Man National Historic Park and the Air Force, is essential to finding the best possible future use of lands in the Hanscom area and continuing the established pattern of compatible land use. To succeed, any development must exist and operate in harmony with the airport and its neighbors.

Massport's study of land use dates back to 1970 when Massport purchased a number of parcels of land next to Hanscom Field in Lincoln and Concord. The properties were purchased as noise buffers to preclude development incompatible with aircraft operations.

In 1980, after the Master Plan was issued, Massport continued to study land use at Hanscom with an eye towards development trends and future operations in the four towns adjacent to Hanscom Field.

Through the years, responsive to community requests about the future of Hanscom Field, Massport has defined areas of Hanscom Field suitable for future aviation or commercial development.

Through a report called the Generic Environmental Impact Report, or GEIR, the Authority examined the potential environmental impacts which might occur under a wide variety of scenarios that embrace different levels of growth through 1990. Each alternative for future growth presents a portrait of plausible growth and development, but none represents a specific plan for growth or development by Massport.

Another study, known as the Greiner Report, focuses only on physical improvements in the civil terminal area. Very simply, the Greiner is a physical analysis of the civil terminal's configuration and capacity. It gives Massport a set of guidelines for the improvement of outdated facilities, so that future growth can be accommodated in a rational way. The Greiner report is a means to reaffirm the character of Hanscom as a general aviation airport.

Currently, Massport is taking another look at various land parcels and defining how they may be used within the various constraints imposed by their location and local adjacent zoning. In every instance Massport will continue its voluntary compliance with local zoning.

A DELICATE BALANCE



Governed by the Master Plan, Massport has minimized adverse environmental impacts by its decisions not to expand the airfield facilities. Commercial carriers, major sources of noise, air pollution, and increased traffic congestion, have not been allowed to operate at Hanscom Field. And, Massport continues to reject any options that would cause environmental harm.

In its management of Hanscom Field, Massport has sought to balance the needs of Hanscom's users with the needs of Hanscom's neighbors. Before any existing or prospective commuter proposes new service, or before an existing or new tenant proposes major construction, they must submit to strict state environmental reviews before final plans can be approved or before a Massport Board vote is sought.

Massport is committed to operating, maintaining, and developing L. G. Hanscom Field as a general aviation airport that will accommodate all appropriate users, including increased corporate aircraft, some origin and destination commuter operators, and some air cargo activity. Massport is also committed to safeguarding the environmental quality of the region. Massport believes that, with the active participation of community and user representatives, we can fulfill both commitments in a manner consistent with the Noise Rules and with Massport's Master Plan of 1978.



If you wish to report an unusual or particularly noisy operation related to Hanscom Field, please call Massport at (617) 274-6814. Your reports will be reviewed by Massport, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Hanscom Field Advisory Commission.

**Massport**

Ten Park Plaza

Boston, MA 02116-3971

Telephone: (617) 973-5500

Telex: 94-0365

L.G. Hanscom Field

Civil Terminal

Bedford, MA 01730

Telephone: (617) 274-7200

Fax: (617) 274-0560

Massport/Far East

New Diamond Building

4-4 Kasumigaseki 1-Chome

Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo 100

Japan

Telephone: (03) 506-5204

Telex: KLINELTD J24957

Massport/Europe

85-87 Jermyn Street

St. James

London SW 1, England

Telephone: (01) 930-7949

Telex: 917835

Massport/New York

Woolworth Building

233 Broadway, Suite 818

New York, NY 10007

Telephone: (212) 608-0775

This report was produced by the
Massport Public Affairs Department.
Massport wishes to acknowledge the
following for their assistance.

Editorial: Francesca de Van

Design: Porras & Lawlor Associates

Photography: Betsy Cullen

Typesetting: Winzeler Typography

Printing: S.T. Associates Inc.